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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 SS-15
SP-02 PA-01 ACDA-12 OMB-01 EB-08 TRSE-00 /067 W
----------093762 120648Z /15
O R 111627Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4982
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY OSLO
USCINCEUR
USMISSION USNATO

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT--PORTION PARA FOUR ADDED)

FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PEPR, MARR, MASS, PINT, UK
SUBJECT: YOUR VISIT TO UK

1. YOUR APRIL 14-17 VISIT TO THE UK AT MULLEY'S INVITATION IS MOST WELCOME TO US AND TO YOUR BRITISH HOSTS. YOU KNOW FRED MULLEY AND HIS VERY RELAXED STYL WELL. HE IS RIGHTLY PLEASED WITH HIS ACHIEVEMENT IN GAINING CABINET APPROVAL FOR MOST OF THE SHORT- AND LONG-TERM DEFENSE IMPROVEMENTS AGREED AT THE 1977 NATO SUMMIT, INCLUDING THE THREE PERCENT BUDGET INCREASE. IMPROVED FINANCIAL CONDITIONS HERE ALLOWED THESE MEASURES TO BE PUSHED THROUGH A GOVERNMENT WHICH HAD REPEATEDLY CUT MILITARY EXPENDITURES AND WHICH HAD HAD TO ACCEPT SIGNIFICANT REDUCTIONS IN SOCIAL SERVICE SPENDING. IT COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED WITH
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THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE PRIME MINISTER. AS YOU KNOW, CALLAGHAN AND MULLEY ARE BOTH STRONG ATLANTICISTS.

2. YOUR VISIT WILL, OF COURSE, FOLLOW CLOSE ON THE HEELS OF THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO DEFER PRODUCTION OF ENHANCED RADIATION WARHEADS UNTIL HE AND OUR ALLIES CAN JUDGE WHETHER THIS RESTRAINT IS MATCHED BY THE

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SOVIET UNION. MULLEY WAS INCORRECTLY REPORTED IN THE PRESS TO BE PERSONALLY AGAINST DEPLOYMENT OF ERW, BUT WE KNOW THAT HE DID A LOT OF WORK BEHIND THE SCENES TO PRESS FOR EUROPEAN SUPPORT FOR ERW. CALLAGHAN -- WHIL CONCERNED WITH THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL REACTION -- HAS TRIED TO BE HELPFUL THROUGHOUT THE ERW DEBATE. BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE DECISION TO DEFER PRODUCTIO AND DEPLOYMENT CAME AS A RELIEF TO THE GOVERNMENT, WHICH HAD NO WISH TO GET INTO A SCRAP WITH ITS OWN LEFT-WINGERS WITH AN ELECTION COMING UP. HOWEVER, WIT THE NOTABLE EXCEPTION OF THE SUNDAY TIMES, THE LEADING BRITISH NEWSPAPERS AND WEEKLY COMMENTARY MAGAZINES CRITICIZED THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION AND THE WAY IN WHICH IT WAS REACHED. ALTHOUGH THE CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION PARTY HAS NOT ISSUED A FORMAL STATEMENT, SHADOW DEFENCE SECRETARY SIR IAN GILMOUR HAS DENOUNCED THE DECISION AS "WEAK AND DANGEROUS." THESE ARE UNUSUALLY STRONG WORDS FROM THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY, WHICH IS CONCERNED ABOUT OUR RESPONSE TO THE GROWING SOVIET THREAT AND HAS GRAVE DOUBTS ABOUT OUR AFRICAN POLICIES.

3. YOU WILL FIND LABOR GOVERNMENT LEADERS CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR PROSPECTS FOR RETAINING POWER IN THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTIONS, THE MOST LIKELY DATE FOR WHICH IS OCTOBER 1978. AN EARLIER ELECTION COULD EVEN OCCUR
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THIS SUMMER IF THE BUDGET, WHICH WAS INTRODUCED IN PARLIAMENT APRIL 11, RUNS INTO HEAVIER SLEDDING THAN THE GOVERNMENT CAN BEAR. THE PRIME MINISTER HAS BEEN HOPING TO RETAIN THE OPTION OF RENEWING HIS ARRANGEMEN WITH THE LIBERAL PARTY INTO ANOTHER SESSION OF PARLIAMENT, THEREBY DELAYING THE ELECTIONS UNTIL NEXT SPRING IN THE EXPECTATION THAT THE WORLD ECONOMY WOULD IMPROVE SIGNIFICANTLY, PULLING THE BRITISH ECONOMY AND LABOR PARTY REELECTION PROSPECTS UP WITH IT. WORLD ECONOMIC PROSPECTS SEEM UNLIKELY TO FULFILL THIS EXPECTATION. BY THE END OF JULY, THE BUDGET WILL BE PASSED ADEQUATELY INTACT OR MUTILATED BY THE LIBERALS, OPPOSITION PARTIES, AND LABOR'S OWN LEFT WING, AND THE BONN ECONOMIC SUMMIT IN MID-JULY WILL ILLUMINATE PROSPECTS FOR BASIC IMPROVEMENTS IN THE ECONOMY.

4. IN ADDITION TO THE NATO MATTERS WHICH YOU AND MULLEY WILL DISCUSS, THERE ARE TWO BILATERAL POLITICAL-MILITARY ISSUES WHICH MAY COME UP. THE BRITISH AGREE THAT IT WOULD SERVE ALLIANCE PURPOSES TO STATION FIFTEEN KC-135 TANKERS IN THE UK, BUT THE USAF REQUEST

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TO REACTIVATE THE NOW URBANIZED GREENHAM COMMON AIR BASE HAS STIRRED UP A HORNET'S NEST. WE HAVE INDICATED THE US WOULD BE HAPPY TO SHARE CROWDED BRIZE NORTON WITH THE RAF, AND THE BRITISH HAVE SUGGESTED FAIRFORD; BUT TO PREPARE A LARGELY UNUSED FACILITY LIKE FAIRFORD (THUS ADDING SIGNIFICANTLY TO NATO RESOURCES) WOULD COST $20-25 MILLION. MULLEY IS PERSONALLY SEIZED WITH THIS PROBLEM, AND I HAVE RECOMMENDED TO WASHINGTON THAT GENERAL NORRIS OF THIRD AF BE DIRECTED TO OPEN WITH THE BRITISH FEASIBILITY DISCUSSIONS ON ALTERNATIVES TO GREENHAM COMMON. THESE SHOULD START SOON, IN MY VIEW.

5. FINALLY, WHILE THE BRITISH ARE PLEASED THAT MARCONI (TEAMED WITH CINCINNATI ELECTRIC) WAS AWARDED A SMALL ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT CONTRACT FOR SLOW FREQUENCY HOPPING IN THE SINCGARS V COMPETITION, THEY MAY EXPRESS SURPRISE THAT TWO (RATHER THAN ONE) CONTRACTS
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WERE AWARDED IN PARALLEL, EVENTUALLY INVOLVING A RUN-OFF BETWEEN THE ANGLO-AMERICAN TEAM AND ITT. WITH THE BRITISH STILL DESPAIRING OF EVER SEEING MUCH TRAFFIC IN THEIR DIRECTION ON THE MILITARY PROCUREMENT "TWO-WAY STREET," MULLEY MAY WELL ASK YOU ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE TWO CONTRACT AWARDS, AND HE IS LIKELY TO RAISE "TWO-WAY STREET" TRAFFIC MATTERS IN GENERAL.

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TAGS: PEPR, MARR, MASS, PINT, UK, NATO, (BROWN, HAROLD)
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Type: TE
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